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The main difference between this explanation of the relation of the manuscripts and that advanced by Unger in the introduction to his edition of the saga is that the latter looks on Sv. as a direct translation of Mb.

Bertelsen's argument for such an analysis of the saga is based upon inconsistencies and contradictions within the text. His method may be illustrated by mentioning the points which he brings forward in support of his theory that the account of Sigurd's youth did not form a part of the original saga, namely: in chapter 163 Mime is introduced as if for the first time in the saga, whereas he had already been mentioned in chapter 57. In like manner King Isung of Bertangaland appears in chapter 168 as if for the first time, but he had already been mentioned in chapter 134; such double accounts are not found elsewhere in the saga. Furthermore, in chapter 26 Valdemar is named as King of Poland, which is a dependency of Russia, but in chapter 155 Poland is an independent kingdom and its ruler is not named.

The chief value and interest attaching to this treatise, it seems to me, lies in the fact that some light is thrown on the manner in which one saga-author, who may be taken as a representative of them all, goes about his work. We see that the sagas in the form in which they have come down to us must be based very largely on written originals as well as on oral tradition.

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ELEMENTARY FRENCH READERS.

Easy French, a Reader for Beginners, with word lists, questionnaire, exercises and vocabulary, by Wm. B. Snow and Charles P. Lebon. Boston: D. C. Heath and Co., 1903.

Simple French, edited with composition exercises and vocabulary, by Victor E. François, A. M., and Pierre F. Giroud, B. ès L. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1903.

A French Reader, arranged for beginners in preparatory schools and colleges, by Fred Davis

Aldrich, A. B., and Irving Lysander Foster, A. M. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1903.

The appearance of three works of the same character within the course of a year would indicate that the want of such textbooks had been felt. All teachers of elementary French will doubtless admit that the *Readers* of a generation or even a decade ago, in spite of their good qualities, are lacking in many essentials. It is no disparagement to their authors that this should be so. Conditions have changed. The *clientèle* has developed and the movement for reform in modern language teaching has called for elementary textbooks better suited to the work as it is now done in the best schools.

The efforts of editors and publishers to meet the new conditions are worthy of praise. If it was no easy task to prepare a reader for beginners a generation ago, it is a much more difficult matter to-day. Then modern languages were taught only in colleges, or in schools which were strictly preparatory for college: now they are taught in all the better high schools, where they have to a large extent supplanted the ancient Classics with pupils who are not looking forward to a strictly Classical college course. Formerly there was but one way of teaching modern languages that was recognized as educational, namely, the grammar and translation method; at present there are many methods more or less direct in character. In fact it may be said that every good teacher has a method of his own, elaborated from the study of pedagogical principles as applied to language teaching and his own experience in his own peculiar conditions. The editor of an elementary French Reader has therefore to satisfy a large *clientèle* with very different aims, conditions of work, and methods of practice. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that no one of the three *Readers* mentioned at the head of this article has attained the distinction of an ideal elementary reading book. The requirements of the trade, the unsettled methods of language teaching, doubtless compelled the editor of each to sacrifice some of his own principles in the construction of his work.

The three works are made up on very much the same lines. In general the editors have been influenced by the same principles, and yet the divergences are numerous and marked. It is not

the aim of this article to review them in detail. That would be barren of results, good or bad. The three works may, however, serve, taken collectively, to establish certain principles for the compilation and arrangement of elementary readers under existing conditions. Whatever may be the character of the school in which a modern language is taught, high school, academy or college, and whatever may be the method of instruction, translation, reading, direct or natural, there are certain characteristics that will be found equally desirable in the first reading book. These essentials are:

1. Short selections each one of which may be comprised in a single lesson. At this stage of the learner's progress he appreciates brevity. A long selection discourages, if it does not frighten him. The natural difficulties of the language and the strangeness of the new idiom make it hard for him to follow a long composition. Such selections can be best used later in separate texts. It is useless to burden an elementary reader with them.

2. The selections should be stories, not descriptions. This principle is followed by all the readers mentioned. Not only should descriptive selections be discarded, but the descriptive portions of the stories should be eliminated as far as possible. The more nearly the story approaches to a bare recital of the facts, the better it succeeds with the class and the more it encourages the practice of thinking in the new language.

3. The text should be simplified. It is folly to argue that the learner must be brought face to face at the very outset with the idiomatic difficulties of the language, else he will never master them. He who argues thus confesses himself ignorant of the first principles of the science of education. The first readings should be simple; the very first, very simple. This does not imply that they should be silly, or even childish. A plain story of modern life can be narrated in the simplest manner, and the editor of an elementary reader need not apologize for reducing his text to a form that is easily comprehensible to the beginner.

4. The subject-matter need not necessarily be legendary. In their literary form fables and folklore are often very difficult reading. If the practice of simplifying the first texts is admitted, it

will be found as easy to arrange modern stories for easy reading as it is to arrange fables, and the transition to regular texts in the later study will be less abrupt.

5. Reading and writing should go hand in hand. Therefore it is a convenience to both pupil and teacher for the reader to contain exercises for writing. The pupil must employ the vocabulary and the forms that he already knows. A writing exercise should follow each selection. Care must be taken, however, to make it different from the text. It should employ the vocabulary of the text, but never be a translation of it, or any part of it. Neither should it call for the most unusual words of the text. The writing exercise in the elementary stage is a drill on correct, easy, usual construction, not primarily a vehicle for enlarging the vocabulary.

These five features seem essential to an elementary reading-book no matter where, how or by whom used. Other features would be desired in some classes and still others, or different ones, elsewhere. The three publications mentioned above recognize some of these essential principles, but no one of them includes all. This omission or divergence constitutes, in my judgment, a defect in these otherwise meritorious readers.

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GERMAN LANGUAGE.

KLARA HECHTENBERG: *Der Briefstil im 17. Jahrhundert*. Ein Beitrag zur Fremdwörterfrage. Berlin: B. Behr, 1903. 8vo, 48 pp.

This investigation is a continuation of research embodied by the author in a dissertation entitled *Das Fremdwort bei Grimmelshausen. Ein Beitrag zur Fremdwörterfrage des 17. Jahrhunderts*. (Heidelberg, 1901.) The term *Brief* is used broadly to include not only letters in the narrower sense, but also *Zeitungsberichte*, *Gespräche*, *Diskurse*, *Tagebücher*, etc. (p. 1). In view of the strictly lexicological nature of the work, the title of the treatise would be more accurately descriptive if worded as follows: *Über das Fremdwort im deutschen Briefstil des 17. Jahrhunderts*.